

CAB earns ‘A’ in rigorous ARMS evaluation

Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt
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A team of experts from Forces Command recently awarded the Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, an ‘A’ grade for their commendable performance during the rigorous three-week Aviation Resource Management Survey evaluation.

ARMS evaluations are a tool used by FORSCOM to rate aviation units in functional fields by measuring their ability to conduct contingency and wartime missions.

The CAB earned a commendable rating in all areas and scored an average above 95 percent. The evaluation assesses each battalion in 1,245 areas, grouped into 12 functional fields.

“It (ARMS evaluation results) shows the true dedication of the Soldiers of the brigade up and down the chain,” said Col. Donald MacWillie, commander of the CAB.

“This is just a testament to what we accomplished when we were in Iraq.”

The CAB received the in-depth evaluation only 90 days after they had redeployed back to Fort Hood from the divisions deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07. The commendable rating is just another feather in the brigades celebrated cap.

During the yearlong Iraqi tour, CAB pilots flew more than 101,225 combat hours. The brigade’s Soldiers responded to more than 955 troops-in-contact with enemy forces, 349 roadside bomb attacks, 379 medical evacuations, 94 air-assault missions, and moved more than 204,000 personnel and more than 12,000 tons of equipment across throughout the Multi-National Division – Baghdad area of operations. The brigade was also recently named Aviation Unit of the Year by the Army Aviation Association of America.

“They come down and evaluate our programs to make sure we’re doing it the right way,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Eric Fremming, brigade safety officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CAB. “We are the only aviation brigade in the history of the ARMS evaluation to get a green rating in every single one of the functional areas. One of those (evaluation areas) is safety and another is support – the safety office manages both (functional areas).

“The significant thing is we are the only brigade with an average score above 95 percent,” he added. “This also has never occurred in the history of the ARMS (evaluation). What this brigade accomplished is unique and historic. It’s a big deal; it’s something we should all be proud of.”

FORSCOM’s aviation evaluation team travel to different installations and conduct their evaluations based on an Army Standard derived from Army Regulations, Field Manuals, Department of the Army Pamphlets, Training Circulars and Standard Operating Procedures. The functional areas evaluated in the survey are operations, flight standardization, supply, aviation maintenance, safety, petroleum readiness, aviation life support equipment, aviation medicine, air traffic control services, training, tactical operations and night vision systems.

“They had a separate evaluator and, in some cases, they had (multiple) evaluators for every one of the functional areas,” Fremming said. “They went through (the functional areas) in enormous detail. Our (safety) checklist has more than 250 specific line items they verify. That includes everything from files, classes, make-up training, all the way down to the nuts and bolts of what we do. It’s very in depth.”

Although the evaluation is complete, and the many hours of work to prepare for it are over, Soldiers of the brigade look back and are proud of the accomplishment.

“This included the efforts of everybody. Across the board, (there was) a lot of work done by a lot of people with historic results,” said Sgt. 1st Class Clark Herring, CAB noncommissioned officer, HHC. “We made history by being the first brigade to be green across the board. It will probably never be repeated by any other brigade ever again – to include ourselves.”